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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6995  
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 7785  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 6525  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 3524  
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA 0818  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1796  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 6394  
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC  
RHMCSUU/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

UNCLAS NEW DELHI 001229

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/INS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: INDIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS: RELEASE AUNG SAN SUU KYI,  
HOLD ELECTIONS

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: Indian press reported June 11 that a group of Indian parliamentarians had submitted an appeal to Prime Minister Singh to ask Burma to release Aung San Suu Kyi and to hold elections. Member of Parliament Sharad Joshi, a leader of the previously defunct Indian Parliamentarians' Forum for Democracy in Burma, spearheaded the appeal. Interlocutors do not anticipate immediate changes in India's policy toward the Burmese military regime, but a group of MPs is working to revitalize the Forum for Democracy in Burma and bring Aung San Suu Kyi's detention and the need for democratic reform in Burma to the floor of both houses of parliament. END SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) On June, Indian media carried stories about an appeal submitted to Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, signed by over 100 Indian parliamentarians, urging him to ask Burma to release pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi and to hold elections. Amit Baruah, Foreign Affairs Editor for the Hindustan Times, said the appeal was no surprise as there is long-standing sympathy for Suu Kyi in India. "This kind of pressure group has been around, it's not vocal but a large section wants Suu Kyi freed." He conveyed that there is a large Burmese student constituency in New Delhi that has good connections with politicians and lobbies effectively. He asserted that the new government is re-energized and ready to be more vocal on issues like democracy in Burma, however it remains unlikely to shift from its pragmatic policy toward the Burmese military government.

13. (SBU) Sharad Joshi, Independent member of the Upper House and leader of the group that submitted the appeal, characterized the situation in Burma as "going from bad to worse" and said that India had not come out boldly on the issue "as required from the largest democracy." He said he intends to revive the Indian Parliamentarians' Forum for Democracy in Burma, which has been largely defunct since leader MP Nirmala Deshpande passed away in 2008. Joshi plans to include new MPs in the group and to bring the issue of releasing Suu Kyi to the floor of both houses of parliament. B.S. Ginandesikan, a Congress M.P. from Tamil Nadu, told us that it is difficult to convince parliamentarians to join the effort, which is part of the reasoning behind addressing an appeal directly to the PM. Abani Roy, Revolutionary Socialist Party MP in the Rajya Sabha from West Bengal, said

that the forum is not yet properly constituted, but that the new members had a good initial meeting and that there were plans for the forum to meet with the PM within days.

14. (SBU) COMMENT: Indian officials have told us consistently over recent years that India's relationship with Burma is "complicated" and takes into consideration diverse interests such as counter-insurgency cooperation, energy, and regional rivalry with China. While this parliamentary group won't change India's interests, it does offer us a chance to engage with influential Indians who may be able to persuade the government to take a harder stance against the junta on democracy, freedom and human rights. END COMMENT.  
BURLEIGH